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Jan 14th 1828

An

Pap. 2 M. 9. 1828

Inaugural Essay
on the

Altered condition

of the

Tongue

in

Disease

by

Frederick Horner of Va.

Jan: 14th 1828

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Whilst a resident pupil in the
Struthouse of this city the ensu-
ing remarks, for the most part, on the
appearances of the tongue were made
and are now thrown together being
copied from my note book or jour-
nal of cases.

It is very questionable whether the
tongue be at all affected in those dis-
eases in which the mucous system
are not implicated primarily or se-
condarily; it is frequently seen in
inflammations of the Secous Mem-
branes that it undergoes little or no
change when the former are uncon-
cerned, as in simple mania and other
affections. The Stomach possessing
as however, so wide a field of Sym-

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pathies that few diseases occur
where it does not soon or long become
affected and what hitherto has been
deemed a symptom of the original,
has only been in truth an effect of a
consecutive mischief. The Membranes
forming the covering of the tongue and
that lining the internal surface of
the alimentary Canal being continuous
and of similar structure: it is rea-
sonable to infer that when any one
of the viscera between which this is
the connecting Medium, is diseased,
the aspect of the tongue presents an
important guide in forming an opin-
ion of the existence, extent and char-
acter of the affection: disease may
exist in one or more of the Viscera;
and may appear either in an acute

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or chronic form, in which order the
appearances of the tongue will be
considered. This organ may as-
sume a variety of aspects during the
existence of disease: its natural red
colour may be exchanged for one still
more deep, it may become dark, brown
and even black, wholly or partially -
its centre and base, or either may be
of these hues usually, while its margins
and apex are of a bright red: it may
be increased or diminished in size - alter-
ed in structure or shape: its papillae
enlarged or diminished: their colour
and elevation heightened or lessened:
the papillae have been deemed peculiar-
ly indicative of the state of the villi
of the mucous membrane which are
so often the unsuspected seats of disease.

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In cases of slight irritation of the
Stomach arising either from an ex-
cess in quantity of ingesta or in qual-
ity of the articles received into it and
applied directly to its mucous surface
the tongue is covered with a slight thin
downy and white coating: which may
be confined to the centre or base or not
if the irritating cause be repeated and
continued for any length of time, the
fur becomes much thickened and as-
sumes a darker hue: should it be con-
sidered farther still, phlogosis ensues;
its advance is faithfully marked by
the condition of the tongue, which now
becomes enlarged, indented on the
edges by contact with the teeth; now
red than natural on the edges and tip
more so also especially at the base and

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tinctics have been been recommended
and should the imitation be not just
may be highly beneficial by inducing
an action of the Reflex of the Stomach
surmounting that previously existing:
thus by attaining their sections upon
which may depend the disordered
condition of that viscous as indicated
by the tongue: should however the point
of imitation supersede the own reflex
to, and much phlogosis be present
known generally by pricking the Epigas-
trum, the nausea and frequent inclin-
ation to vomit - they only tend to
aggravate and increase the gastric dis-
turb - the tongue here does not desert
its post, but like a watchful sentinel

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points out the progress of the morbid
process: its colour becomes of a still more
decided red which is now general
the white mucous coating is diminish-
ished: the papillae now elevated and
pointed and in proportion to the intensi-
ty of the inflammation is the organ
altered: a bright scarlet colour in-
dicates an active state of inflamma-
tion, this is commonly seen in the Stomach
of drunkards and those guilty
of great excess: In Mania a pto-
sis which originates in inordinate stimu-
lation of the Stomach &c. followed by
intelligent suppression of nervous ener-
gy: the tongue is of a bright scarlet
thin, polished and pointed and
very tremulous, inability in many in-
stances to protrude it: Dissection shows

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the most unequivocal signs of inflammation - the aspect of the stomach much diminished and innumerable dark or red spots over the whole surface of the mucous membrane almost inducing a belief at a little distance that blood had been smeared over it: the coat itself collected into rugae - traversing the surface transversely; in some instances the size of the viscus much diminished, in others increased: the parietes thickened or very thin: the duodenum scarcely ever fails to present some or all of these appearances -

When gastric disorder has existed for a considerable time and the small intestines have become involved - the tongue is less red than before but very

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much loaded - it may be proper here
to remark that much difference ex-
ists between the mucus loaded and
purged: the first implies its being
covered with a thick, tenacious or ma-
licia mucus generally of a white colour
but often brown and of a soapy con-
sistence; the latter has soft, long thickly
set villi, resembling velvet as if grow-
ing out of the surface of the tongue
the former is at first moist and in-
creases more particularly the affections of
the Stomach: while the latter may be
either moist or dry - or is found when
both the Stomach and intestines are
concerned: both are met with in
most of the Summer and autumnal
fevers - arising from marsh exhalation
and it is well known how much the

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Prima via are impeded; at first
when much irritability of Stomach,
heat of skin excited pulse &c, exist
the tongue is dry, loaded and white.
At the several accessions of the hot flux
it becomes brown and dry, during
the sweats; moist and soft, but the
brown coat continues, after appropriate
remedial measures have been taken
and gastric disturg. subsided: it then
on the vertex and lip. As perspirable
state of the skin seems very propitious
in altering the condition of the tongue.
owing to the great reciprocity of ac-
tion between the mucous and osseous
tissues. Thus when we have great heat
of the surface and mild soothing
remedies are applied by means of
the Stomach and rectum as well as

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The skin itself - the first sign of an abatement of the symptoms will be an alteration in the aspect of the tongue, which from being dry and parched, becomes moist and soft.

The use of Calomel in the treatment of these affections has been so indiscriminate hitherto that little attention seems to have been paid to their immediate operation on the alimentary canal and indeed from several cases which have come under my own observation I must conclude that their exhibition has in many instances tended to aggravate rather than check the disease - this has been clearly indicated by the alteration in the aspect of the tongue and if this as has been ascertained is such a diagnostic as

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may he relied on in inflammation of
this liver - it is clear that instead of
lessening the degree or destroying ~~all~~
altogether the existing disease, they
only assist and establish it more firmly

A gentleman who felt unwell had
some little fever; uneasiness of Stomach
tongue somewhat white and coated -
took a pill of Calomel and Scammony
it operated both by Catharsis and Sweat
and left him with most violent
pain of Stomach with much nausea &
extreme pain or pricking of the Epigast-
rium - tongue red and polished, much
severe disturbance - intense fever for
several successive days: he was con-
fined to lemonade alone as drink,
an occasional dose of Sol. Effluvia
After this treatment he recovered in a few days

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another case occurred to me in the
Huntsdon. The Patient had slight
rheumatic pains in ^{his} legs and arms - he
took a small dose of Colicium - at
night a Scuis pulv the former passed
most actively the over night: I found
him next morning in extreme pain -
much general distress, jactitation and
anxiety of countenance intense pain
on pressing epigastrium and abdomen
puls much excited - quick and irri-
table - head-ache - at times with dizzy-
ness - skin hot, dry and harsh - tongue
scarlet especially at the edges and tip
and very dry - none of which symp-
toms existed before he took the Medi-
cine - I now ordered him to be leeches
over the stomach - cold demulcent
drinks - cold flax seed mucilaginous

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excrescences and perforations to abdomen.
He was conscious in three days,
tongue clean, moist and natural;
Other cases illustrative of the same thing
might be adduced did the occasion
warrant it.

When the active stage of inflam-
mation shall have passed off, symptoms
of irritation may linger and now are
more decided than those presented by
the tongue: they are, however, very va-
rious in character and degree - in light
cases there is a thin, white fur in the
centre or a thick dark patch on the
base and root, the edges clean and
often red: its size and shape are those
in allusion - the surface is flat and
broad - edges thick narrow and round
red - apex very pointed - the surface

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frequently of a dull red or mottled
colour, with a slight coat of fur some-
times of a sudden aspect longitudinal
and transverse superficial furrows
then occur most commonly when there
is but a slight remnant of cicatrized
digestion not being so vigorous as it
might be or when certain actions of
food induce oppression and a sinking
weight and distension: these are relieved
most effectually by a close adher-
ence to regimen and due regulation
of diet: a rentinched, shrivelled and
pointed tongue, dry and smooth white
and almost bloodless is an alarming
symptom occurring in protracted affec-
tions of the large intestines: one case
in chronic Colicitis which I have seen
it occurred and lost motion infested

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shined elevations in the colon lay-
ing bare the muscular coat. Sometimes
a smooth shining pellicle forms on the
surface of the tongue which in a few
days becomes crisp, cracks and peels
off, leaving a smooth, clean, dry surface
of a light scarlet colour: this frequently
attends the most obstinate kind
of diarrhoea occurring in protracted
cases of fever &c. in Hungary in the
advanced stages the tongue becomes
brown a black dry and thickly en-
crusted in its centre deep fissures in
its surface - its margins of a bright
red appearing at other times as if
meal had been sprinkled on it or
that milk had been drunk. the fur
in the centre is of a triangular shape
a dark strip is sometimes seen extend

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ing down the centre from base to tip
 which continues till death takes place.
 The black colour seems to depend al-
 together on the drying process: as it is
 seldom that we see a black moist
 surface: this thickly matted coat
 of black fur may easily be man-
 uled off. In denying that
 the tongue forms a diagnostic in the
 affections of the serous tissues I may
 mention that in Phrenitis and Hydn-
 cephalus it is invariably clean and
 natural - some few cases to the con-
 trary may happen, it is true - but in
 these much gastric and intestinal
 derangement exists: the same remark
 applies to Pleurisy &c. In Phthisis
 and hectic fever few have not remark-
 ed the florid, polished and perfectly

[Faint, illegible handwriting on lined paper, likely bleed-through from the reverse side.]

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clean aspect of the tongue. continuing
 so until the close of the attack when
 the digestion is so apt to become im-
 paired and the patient ~~is~~ harassed
 by irritability and nausea of stomach
 to such a degree as to forbid any food
 being received into it -

In peritoneal inflammation, in peri-
 carditis &c &c - the same remarks
 are applicable -

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